

CHAMBER of COMMERCE

July 22, 2003

OF EASTERN CONNECTICUT, INC.

Update



Congressman Simmons supports homeland security spending bill

Dear Friends:

In June the House of Representatives approved, 415 to 0, H.R. 2555, which is a \$29.4 billion measure for the operations and activities of the Department of Homeland Security. This spending measure will finance border and transportation security, immigration control, the Coast Guard, the Secret Service and dozens of related programs, including our nation's first responders. It is the first appropriations bill for the Homeland Security Department, which was created last November. I am pleased with the support this bill received as I have made increased funding for first responders a top priority. First responders play a unique role in the fight to protect our nation. Firefighters, police and emergency response personnel benefit in particular from the House-passed measure since it

By Rob Simmons
Connecticut Congressman,
2nd District

provides a 25 percent increase over the president's request. The bill provides \$4.42 billion for grants to first responders. Since the September 11 attacks, I have voted for \$20.8 billion for first responders through annual spending bills and emergency appropriations measures. H.R. 2555 also provides \$5.6 billion for the president's "Project Bioshield," which will encourage the development of chemical and bio-weapon vaccines and treatments. This bill provides the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) with \$5.2 billion, \$360 million more than requested, and caps the number of airport screeners at 45,000. It prohibits the agency from deploying its new airline passenger profiling system until studies are completed with respect to its

accuracy and impact on privacy. The new spending bill also makes available \$900 million to develop biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological countermeasures to potential terrorist attacks; \$6.7 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard, which is 7 percent more than the current level; and \$60 million to develop devices to protect commercial airliners from shoulder-fired missiles. Also added to the bill was an amendment to require the TSA to devise a plan to inspect all cargo that is placed on passenger jets. Agency rules do not require inspection of paid cargo that travels on passenger jets. We cannot truly enjoy the benefits of our freedoms unless we are secure. Our nation is more secure and our people are safer today than prior to September 11, 2001. But there is more to do. The Constitution says our government must "provide for the common defense." This bill is the first down-payment



Congressman Rob Simmons

toward meeting our commitment to that cause. I am proud to be part of the bipartisan majority in supporting our nation's first homeland security spending measure.

Sincerely,
Rob Simmons
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut